



ALL MEN (AND WOMEN) ARE EQUAL

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Why, whether you're Fred from Holland who's 205 cm tall and over 100 kg, or Marianne from Germany, who's half his weight, or me - about half way between them - did we all feel comfortable on my slalom gear with the exact same boom height, harness line length and position? Is it wizardry or logical?

If it's logical, could this concept that all men and women are equal transcend throughout windsurfing gear and riders, despite their different heights?

Guy Cribb inspires us equally with his wizardry and logic...

GUY CRIBB INTUITION

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Fred and Marianne both finding my slalom gear very comfortable ...



...despite their vastly different physiques.

We established that harness line length had nothing to do with arm length when we examined world champs Jason Polakow at 185 cm tall and Kauli Seadi at 170 cm tall and found Jason used shorter lines than Kauli - despite his longer arms.

Harness line length is a technique choice, not a physical consequence. (More reading - 'The Long And Short Of It', available at guycribb.com/technique or *Windsurf Mag* Nov 2011)



What has arm length got to do with it? Long lines are to get you lower.

We also find that all the world's best windsurfers use the same harness line position (with tolerances of only millimetres) (check out 'Crunch Time' at guycribb.com/technique or *Windsurf mag* August 2013) (measurable with the Cribb Sheet (guycribb.com))

So it shouldn't be too perplexing to suggest we should all use the same boom height too?



Marianne in 8 knots on my Neil Pryde 78 RS Racing sail and JP Slalom board, and me in 28 knots on the same gear, tuned identically - equally comfortable.

Boom height is primarily set due to the conditions and your technique requirements, rather than your physical height (for people planing in straps and harness.)

This is not an absolute truth, BUT there is a very strong geometrical argument to prove that it's correct. And I wanted you to stimulate your thoughts about it - that boom height is unrelated to your height...

Check out 'Double Shot' August 2012 issue or at guycribb.com/technique to see how the boom effects your early planing or control (up for early planing, down for control)

Depending on your requirements boom height can move about 30 cm - a massive range that makes it the most significant tuning device you have available and the most frequently adjusted.

With this stunning 'daily' range (that on any given day with the same gear it might change 30 cm), I wonder how anyone could seriously relate it to your height? (Remember I am representing an argument here - I'm only the messenger - before I get throttled by decades of ancient beliefs...)

So, since harness line length and position, downhaul tension, batten tension, fin and sail sizes are all constants, and that the boom height's primary function is control the amount of power, it should not be surprising that the riders height has very little influence over it...

And that isn't even the real argument - that's just popular observation.

The real argument is this:

Your harness hook is your primary connection to the rig.

Whether you are 200 cm tall or 150 cm tall, your harness hook is about half way up your body, so the real disparity is only 25 cm.

Now just to keep you keen I am going to leave this subject here to interject with a massively valuable technique tip, then pick up the boom height argument at the end of the feature...



IT AINT HEAVY, IT'S LIGHT!

How heavy are you?

Fred is 105 kilos. When he stands bolt upright his 105 kilos sinks the tail of the board and he goes nowhere. Only when he hangs off the boom, by arms or harness lines, does his weight go onto the mast foot in the middle of the board and create some stability.

Marianne is 50 kilos, most boards feel stable under her feet wherever she stands.

Q: As far as the rig is concerned, who feels heavier - Fred or Marianne?

A: Whichever one of them is lowest...

You see, if Fred is bolt upright he has none of his 105 kilos hanging off the rig. In this position the rig probably needs about 5 kilos of power to pull him off balance, which is like a 5-knot gust. Whereas if Marianne is low her 50 kilos is hanging off the rig and feels like 50 kilos - 10 times heavier than Fred.

If you understand this concept, you'll see why some expert lightweight riders can still handle a large sail easier than a heavyweight, and why some heavyweights can plane earlier than less experienced lightweights.

So the lower you are, the heavier you are.



If you're upright the rig will think you're weightless and find it easy to 'pull you off.'

Only when you're low are you truly heavy.



SUMMARY

Lower is heavier - great for control in overpowered conditions.

Higher is lighter - great for early planing.

Adjusting your boom higher or lower facilitates this wonder of adjusting your weight (whilst also adjusting the power of the sail - higher boom reduces outhaul tension making the sail more powerful/lower boom increases outhaul making it less powerful - see 'Double Shot' (Aug 2012 issue) or guycribb.com/technique)

The Boom Height Argument (continued)

When two riders, for example Marianne and Fred are both experts (after a week on an INTuition Freeride course!) then they are both sailing really low down/close to the water. At this point the disparity between their harness hooks that was 25 cm is now basically zero, and this is why their boom heights should be the same height.



Fred and Marianne have the same harness hook height, so surely they need the same boom height?

If your harness hook is the same as Fred's or Marianne's, i.e., if you are between 150 cm to 210 cm tall, then I suspect you should have the same boom height as them...

And what is that correct boom height?

Well, that's relative to how much power you have, or what you're trying to achieve with your technique. There's a 30 cm range of movement there so it would be illogical to say your boom height could be related to your height.

I suggest you start with the boom height 66% of the way up the cutout and adjust it up or down from there depending what you're up to. Some examples below:

Learning to use footstraps - generally a higher boom is useful.

Learning to waterstart - generally a lower boom is useful.

Wave sailing - side off shore = a higher boom, side onshore = a lower boom.

Freeriding - flat water = higher boom, rough water = lower boom.

But overall, if you need more control, lower the boom, if you need to plane earlier, raise it.

And at all times in windsurfing, you can never be too low...

Guy Cribb INTuition

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